



CORRESPONDENCE RULES, PREPARATION & FORMATS

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WHY DO I NEED THIS?

**You are your own
secretary**



OVERVIEW

- **Who signs what?**
- **References**
- **Correspondence**
 - **Rules**
 - **Preparation**
 - **Formats**



WHO SIGNS WHAT?

- **“All official correspondence, to include messages, emanating from HQMC will be issued in the name of the CMC.” MCO 5216.20**
- **CMC delegates signature authority**
 - **“By title” to general officers, SES, & separate staff agency heads. Delegated no lower than G0/SES @ Division level**

W. L. NYLAND
Assistant Commandant of the
Marine Corps

- **“By direction” to officers/civilians**

J. L. WELSH
By direction



WHO SIGNS WHAT? (continued)

- **Exceptions**
 - Establishes, makes exception to, or changes policy
 - Required by law or regulation to be signed by CMC
 - Addressed to higher authority & concerns mission or general efficiency of unit
- **Limitations**
 - Matters/subject w/i signer's AOR
 - Good judgment indicates need not be forwarded to higher authority
 - Civilians (other than staff agency head) will not sign when it might be construed as a reflection on the performance of duty of a commanding officer
 - May not sign "for" another authorized "By direction"



REFERENCES

- **SECNAVINST 5216.5D, Department of the Navy Correspondence Manual (under revision)**
- **MC0 5216.20, HQMC Supplement to the DoN Correspondence Manual (revision pending)**
- **GP0 Style Manual**
- **DoD 5110.4-M, Manual for Written Material, 2 Mar 04**
- **Dictionary**
- **Thesaurus**



CORRESPONDENCE RULES

- **Typeface**
10- to 12-point (or pitch)
block style (Courier New) w/exceptions
- **Two spaces after a period**
Exceptions: U.S.
Signature block
Certain abbreviations (Mr.)
- **One space after closing parenthesis**
- **Indent subparagraphs 4 spaces**
(Tab key)



CORRESPONDENCE RULES (continued)

- **Signature block begins in the center**
 - **Name ALL CAPS**
Exception: CMC Preference
- **“Subj:” line on second & subsequent pages**



CORRESPONDENCE PREPARATION

- **Consider your audience**
 - Executive level
 - Get to the point
 - Don't make them dig
 - Provide all necessary information
- **Completely staff**
- **Calculate timelines**
- **Provide the trons**



CORRESPONDENCE PREPARATION

- **BLUF = Bottom Line Up Front (main point, then explain)**
- **KISS = Keep It Simple and Short**
- **Organize thoughts; logical flow**
- **'Speak' to your audience; active voice**
- **References and Enclosures**
 - **If used/listed, must be cited in text**
 - **Cite in order listed (then 'bounce')**
- **Acronyms**
 - **governed by principle of immediate recognition; meaning immediately clear**
 - **if identified, must be used**



CORRESPONDENCE PREPARATION (cont)

- **Spell Check will embarrass you**
 - lead led
 - two to too
 - four for fore
 - their there they're
 - as ass
- **PROOFREADING**
 - Author = often too familiar
 - The more you look at it, the less effective you become
 - Get another set of eyes



CORRESPONDENCE FORMATS

- **ACTION/INFO MEMO**
- **MEMORANDUM FOR**
- **GENERAL OFFICER PERSONAL LETTERS
(STAR STATIONARY)**
- **POSITION PAPER**



ACTION/INFO MEMORANDUM

- **TO SECDEF OR SECNAV**
 - **ACTION MEMO** outlines what the Secretary should do, the due date, and why it is ok to take the action
 - **INFO MEMO** outlines what the Secretary needs to know, and additional key points, as necessary
- On letterhead
- 1 page unless complex, requires greater explanation
- Short, concise & clear bullet statements (black dot)
- Font: TIMES NEW ROMAN; Size: 13 Point; 1" Margins
- Double space between headings & bullets
- Do not staple or use clam clips



Action Memo

LETTERHEAD

CLASSIFICATION

ACTION MEMO

Month, Day, Year, Time

FOR: SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

DepSec Action_____

FROM: Name, Position and Organization (signature and date)

SUBJECT: Action Memo

- What the Secretary should do.
- Due date for action.
- Why it is OK for the Secretary to take the recommended action.
- Additional key points/contentious issues/problem areas: incoming at TAB B; background information at TAB C.

RECOMMENDATION: SecDef approve/sign (TAB A)

NOTE: If no document for approval/signature at TAB A use:

RECOMMENDATION: That SecDef approve release of funds by initialing as appropriate:

Approve _____ Disapprove _____

COORDINATION: TAB D (or NONE)

Attachments:

As stated

Classification/Declassification Authority and Instructions

Prepared By: Name, Phone

CLASSIFICATION



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
2 NAVY ANNEX
WASHINGTON, DC 20380-1775

IN REPLY REFER TO:

SAMPLE SecDef ACTION MEMO

ACTION MEMO

(LEAVE BLANK; DATE ENTERED SEPARATELY WHEN SIGNED)

FOR: SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (ALL CAPS) DepSec Action _____

THROUGH: Secretary of the Navy (Natural Capitalization) (internal mod)

FROM: Colonel J. I. Musca, Director, Marine Corps Staff (Natural Capitalization)

SUBJECT: Dual Absence (Natural Capitalization)

- The Commandant and the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps will be absent from the Washington, DC area during 28, 29, and 30 August 2003.
- The Commandant will be in WestPac (Thailand and the Philippines) AOR. He will be available via non-secure and secure communications and has a dedicated aircraft that will enable his rapid return to Washington, DC. The Commandant will return on Wednesday, 3 September 2003.
- The Assistant Commandant will be in Jacksonville, NC at Camp Lejeune and Ashville, NC. He will be available via non-secure and secure communications and will return to Washington, DC on Sunday, 31 August 2003.
- During this absence, the Acting Commandant of the Marine Corps will be:
TIME/DATE ACTING COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

0730, 28 Aug 03 through 1600, 29 Aug 03	LtGen Emil R. Bedard, USMC 703-614-2502 or DSN 224-2502
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1601, 29 Aug 03 through 0730, 31 Aug 03	LtGen Garry L. Parks, USMC 703-784-9012 or DSN 278-9012
--	--

RECOMMENDATION: SecDef approve dual absence by initialing as appropriate:

Approved _____ Disapproved _____

COORDINATION: NONE.

Prepared by: Colonel T. D. Sims, 703-614-2828



Info Memo

LETTERHEAD

CLASSIFICATION

INFO MEMO

Month, Day, Year, Time

FOR: SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

FROM: Name, Position and Organization (signature and date)

SUBJECT: Info Memo

- What the Secretary needs to know.
- Additional key points, as required: background at TAB_.

COORDINATION: TAB D (or NONE)

Attachments:

As stated

Classification/Declassification Authority and Instructions

Prepared By: Name, Phone

CLASSIFICATION



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
2 NAVY ANNEX
WASHINGTON, DC 20380-1775

IN REPLY REFER TO:

SAMPLE SecDef INFO MEMO

INFO MEMO

(Leave blank: date entered separately when signed)

FOR: SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (ALL CAPS)

THROUGH: Secretary of the Navy (Natural Capitalization) (internal mod)

FROM: General M. W. Hagee, Commandant of the Marine Corps (Natural Capitalization)

SUBJECT: HQMC Action Officers Course (Natural Capitalization)

- On behalf of the Assistant Commandant, the Director, Marine Corps Staff will sponsor an Action Officers (AO) Course 2-3 December, 2003 at the James Wesley Marsh Center, Quantico, VA.
- The AO Course is targeted to military and civilian AOs recently assigned to HQMC or recently assuming action officer responsibilities. The course will: (1) provide them a general overview of the Headquarters; (2) identify the major functions and responsibilities of the HQMC departments/separate divisions; (3) provide insights of senior leadership and seasoned AOs; and (4) provide DoD, DoN and HQMC unique administrative tools and resources to be successful in their assignments.

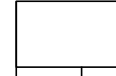
COORDINATION: NONE.

Prepared by: Mr. Jeff Tabb 703-697-1043



GENERAL OFFICER PERSONAL LETTER (STAR STATIONARY)

MODEL: PERSONAL STATIONERY (ACMC)



1

(TYPE DATE CENTERED AFTER SIGNATURE USING SAME PITCH AS TEXT)

Dear General Fields,²

The left and right margins will be 1 inch using 12 or 10-pitch courier type. Indent the first line of each paragraph to the 5th space. Never put letter on justification and never use date stamp; always type the date after signature.

Mention any enclosures in the text, but do not describe them in an enclosure block. Always balance appearance of text on page. If the text of the letter is 8 lines or less, it will be double-spaced. The maximum number of lines of text and spacing on small 4-star stationery should be 41 lines. If the letter requires a second page, then large 4-star stationery will be used (second and succeeding pages numbered one-half inch from the bottom page and centered). The second page of large 4-star stationery is the same quality grain of stationery as the first page (not bond paper).

Signature block and mailing address should be arranged as shown here.

Respectfully, ³

M. J. WILLIAMS
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps

Major General Arnold Fields, USMC
Director, Marine Corps Staff
Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps
2 Navy Annex
Washington, DC 20380-1775

- Note 1: The signature block will be aligned on the bottom star of the stationery, located in the center of the flag as shown.
- Note 2: In most cases the salutation will be as prescribed by the DON correspondence manual (as modified by Appendix A of this Order).
- Note 3: Use "Sincerely, Respectfully," or "Very respectfully," depending on the seniority of the addressee. As a general rule, "Very respectfully," is used when writing to members of Congress, cabinet members and the Secretary of a military Department.



Memorandum For

MODEL: "MEMORANDUM FOR" MEMORANDUM

Appropriate Letterhead

(6 blank line from top of the paper)

5000
DMCS
(Date)

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS
DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE (M2)
DIRECTOR OF TEST AND EVALUATION AND
TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS (N091)

Subj: THE MEMORANDUM FOR

1. The "memorandum for" is used between Senior officials to correspond with other senior officials.
2. Use letterhead paper and follow the format shown here. In place of the "From:" and "To:" line, you use an "address" line (see above). Because the "memorandum for" lacks a "From:" line, show the signer's title below the typed name.
3. List multiple addresses as shown above. If an addressee's title is longer than one line, the second line should be indented two additional spaces, as shown above.

A. FIELDS
Director, Marine Corps Staff



Position Paper (a.k.a. Decision Paper)

MODEL: POSITION PAPER

(Date)

POSITION PAPER

(1 blank line between headings and paragraphs)

Subject: Format for a Position Paper

1. Purpose. To whom? For what reason?
2. Major Points. Brief summary of main points to be made.
 - a. Each point should be stated in one brief sentence.
 - b. Major points should stand alone and not require amplification by subordinate points.
3. Discussion
 - a. This type of paper should be used to provide rationale to support a decision or position the reader should take.
 - b. Remember to tailor discussion to the needs and knowledge of the reader. Subparagraphs such as Participants, Issues, Facts, Views, Opposing Views, Headquarters Marine Corps Staff Position, Fallback Position, or Conclusion may be used.
 - c. Write in a short, direct, conversational style that allows the reader to understand the key point of the issue and come to a logical conclusion. Use the active voice and avoid jargon.
 - d. General format is not as important as content. Tailor the paper to fit the need.
 - e. Do not exceed two pages.
4. Recommendation. The recommendation must flow logically from the Major Points and Discussion.

(2 blank lines)

(Decision Grid as appropriate)

(2 blank lines)

Prepared by: A. C. TIONOFFICER, Maj, USMC
Div, LPO, 697-9999



DECISION GRID EXAMPLE

For Decision by the Commandant

Dir, MP Recommends: Approval: (line for initials)

Disapproval: (line for initials)

DC M&RA Recommends: Approval: (line for initials)

Disapproval: (line for initials)

ACMC Recommends: Approval: (line for initials)

Disapproval: (line for initials)

CMC Decision: **Approved:** (line for initials)

Disapproved: (line for initials)

For multiple recommendations, restate the recommendation followed by the decision grid



FORMATS ON THE WEB

- **HQMC Route Sheet**
- **ACTION MEMO**
- **MEMO FOR**
- **Position Paper
(a.k.a. Decision
Paper)**
- **Talking Paper**
- **Letterhead**
- **INFO MEMO**
- **Star Stationary**
- **Information Paper**
- **Business Letter**



FORMATS ON THE WEB

WWW.HQMC.USMC.MIL

Select: 'Director, Marine Corps Staff'

Select: 'General Information'

[illegible]

B



HQMC COORDINATION PAGE

COORDINATION PAGE

<u>STAFF AGENCY</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE</u>
DC M&RA	Mr. Rhodes	1 Aug 03
DC PP&O	MajGen Koklock	30 Jul 03
DC I&L	Col Rivers	30 Jul 03
DC Avn	Col Conant	3 Aug 03 NonConcur-See Attached
CL	Mr. Murphy	2 Aug 03
Dir PA	None Obtained	delivered 15 Jul- No response as of 15 Aug
.....		
UnderSecDef (AT&L)	Mr. Oliver	10 March 2001
General Counsel	Mr. Dell'Orto	22 April 2001
ASD (LA)	Mr. Di Rita	20 April 2001
UnderSecDef (P&R)	Mr. Cragin	18 April 2001 – NonConcur – See Attached
ASD (C3I)	None Obtained	delivered 1 April – No response as of 22 April



PACKAGE BUILD

- **Route sheet**
- **Tab A: The action/info document**
- **Tab B: Incoming correspondence**
- **Tab C: Background/back up info**
- **Tab D: Coordination page (or last tab)**



REMINDERS

- **“Sign Here” Tabs**
- **Signature blocks:**
 - **SecNav: Gordon R. England**
 - **CMC: M. W. Hagee**
 - **ACMC: W. L. NYLAND**
- **Do not staple**
- **Marking for classified packages**
- **Mark classification on all disks**
- **Cover embossed flags**



RESOURCES

- **REFERENCES**
- **YOUR DEPARTMENT/DIVISION/BRANCH ADMIN STAFF**
- **PREVIOUS EXAMPLES**
- **HQMC EDITOR**



ADMIN OFFICERS/CHIEFS (all numbers DSN)

- AR: (224-1837/3359)
- AVN: (224-2401/2356)
- CL: (227-5357)
- C4: (227-5693/2)
- HS: (224-4477)
- HHD: (288-2261)
- HQBN: (224-2014)
- I: (225-8581)
- L: (225-8581)
- HEditor (227-1043/1668)
- IGMC: (224-1206)

- JJA: (224-2737)
- M&RA: (278-9012)
- MARBKS: (288-4891)

- MCCDC: (278-2665)
- MCRC: (278-9429)
- OLA: (224-1686)
- PA: (224-8010)
- PP&O: (224-2502/3301)
- P&R: (224-1080)
- REL: (224-5630)
- SD: (224-1202)
- SPD: (224-1515)

